

# ANIMAL TRACES

## DEBARKED TREE



**Deer or Elk**  
Long area on small tree



**Woodpecker**  
Small or large holes



**Black Bear**  
Scratch marks and deep gouges



**Beaver**  
Gnaw at tree base  
**Porcupine**  
Gnaw on tree trunk or branches

## FEEDING SIGNS



**Rabbit**  
Clean cut



**Deer**  
Torn end



**Beaver**  
Sharp point and stripped bark



**Squirrel, Chipmunk, or Rodent**  
Chewed nuts and pinecones



**Insect**  
Chewed leaf



**Owl, Eagle, or Hawk pellet**  
Regurgitated fur, feathers, and bones

## SCAT

Scat diameter: Size varies depending on animal size.  
Composition depends on diet.



**Rabbit**  
3/8"  
Plants



**Deer**  
5/8"  
**Elk**  
3/4"  
Plants



**Red Fox**  
1/2"  
Fur, bones, berries, plants



**Coyote**  
3/4"  
Fur, bones, fruit, berries



**Domestic Dog**  
1"  
Uniform consistency



**Raccoon**  
3/4"  
Berries, insects, fish, shellfish



**Skunk**  
3/4"  
Insects, plants, fur, bones



**Mouse** 1/16"  
**Rat** 1/8"  
**Chipmunk** 1/4"  
**Squirrel** 1/2"



**Black Bear**  
2"  
Seeds, plants, berries, insects, fur



**Goose, Duck, Turkey, or Grouse**  
White, green, or brown

# TRACES

In addition to tracks, many other animal traces give clues about animal habits and activities. Debarked trees, feeding signs, scat, fur, antlers, feathers, bones, nests, holes, tunnels, animal paths, and bedding areas indicate animal activity that may help identify wildlife species.

Always use a stick to safely investigate animal scat and traces.

## PROTECT AND PRESERVE

Please make your visit safe and enjoyable. Obey all posted rules and regulations and respect fellow visitors and the resources of the park.

- Be prepared and bring the proper equipment. Natural areas may possess hazards. Your personal safety and that of your family are your responsibility.
- Be aware of hunting seasons, and wear fluorescent orange to be easily seen in the forest.
- Do your part to keep wildlife wild! Enjoy wildlife from a safe distance and do not feed or approach wild animals.
- Because uncontrolled pets may chase wildlife or frighten visitors, pets must be physically controlled, attended at all times, and on a leash, caged, or crated. Electronic fences and leashes are prohibited. Pets are prohibited in swimming areas.
- Protect wild animals by cleaning up after your pet. Pet feces may contain diseases that can infect wildlife.
- Please recycle. Place trash accumulated during your stay in proper receptacles or take it home with you.

# Animal Tracks and Traces



DCNR - Bureau of State Parks  
Outdoor Programming Services Division  
OPSprogramming@pa.gov  
www.visitParks.com



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

# ANIMAL TRACKS

F= Front foot H= Hind foot T= Tail drag may be present

### Walkers

Track Pattern:

F	3"	4.5"	2.5"	2.25"	1.5-5"	2"	1.75"
H	3.5"	4.5"	2.25"	2"	1.5-5"	2"	1.75"
	Deer	Elk	Coyote	Red Fox	Domestic Dog	Bobcat	House Cat

### Pacers

Track Pattern:

F	2.5"	2"	1.25"	1.75"	3.75"	3"	1.5"
H	4"	2"	2"	2.75"	8"	6"	2.5"
	Raccoon	Striped Skunk	Opossum(T)	Porcupine(T)	Black Bear	Beaver (T)	Muskrat (T)

### Gallopers

Track Pattern:

F	1/4"	1/2"	1.5"	1"
H	1/2"	1"	2.5"	3.5"
	Mouse (T)	Chipmunk	Gray Squirrel	Rabbit

### Birds

Track Pattern:

F	2.5"	4"	2"	3" or 4"
	Crow	Turkey	Ruffed Grouse	Duck or Goose

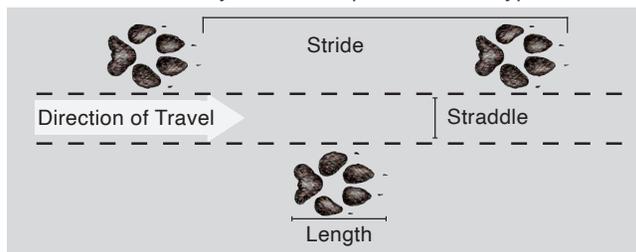
Animal track graphics courtesy of *Greenbelly Meals*

### Bounders

Track Pattern:

F	3"	1"	1.25"
H	4.5"	1"	1.5"
	Otter (T)	Weasel	Mink

Track sizes noted are the maximum length for an adult animal. Tracks vary based on speed and soil type.



# TRACKING TIPS

**WHEN:** Look for tracks in early morning, after a coating of snow, or after a light rain. Winter and spring are usually better times for tracking.

**WHERE:** Most animal tracks are found in mud, snow, damp sand, near a food or water source, in a narrow corridor, or at the edge of a habitat such as a tree line or water body. With deeper snow or mud, tracks are less clear.

**WHO:** Look at the track pattern, number of toes, webbing between toes, claw/nail marks, size of front and hind prints, and a visible tail drag to find clues on the animal species. Walkers and bounders usually have similar-sized front and hind feet. Typically, pacers and gallopers have a smaller front foot and a larger back foot.

**HOW:** Walk beside tracks to keep from disturbing the track pattern. When following tracks that are less visible, use a string to measure the stride (length between prints) to help find the next track. To determine differences between species with very similar tracks, measure the straddle (the distance between the left and right tracks). Smaller species have a smaller straddle.

**PRESERVATION:** Easily preserve tracks with a photograph. Position yourself so the sun and shadows provide the most contrast. For physical preservation of size and details, use a casting form and plaster-of-paris.



Animal tracks tell a story of who, where, and sometimes why. What animal stories can you find outside?

